Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

Illustrated in Colour by René Bull

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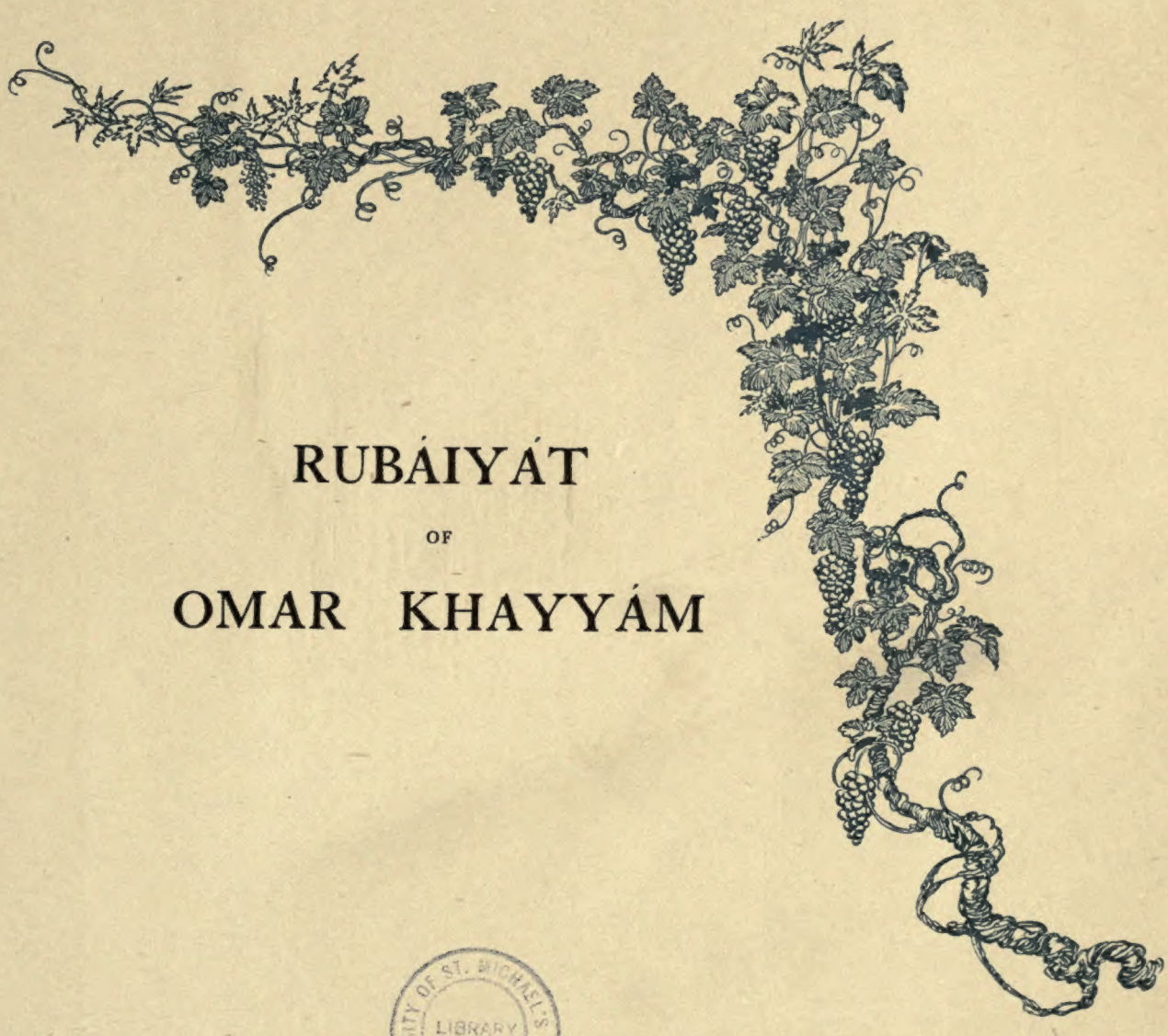

RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM

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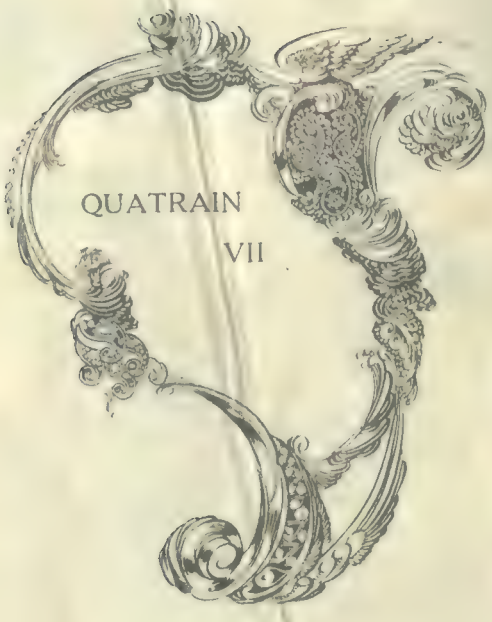
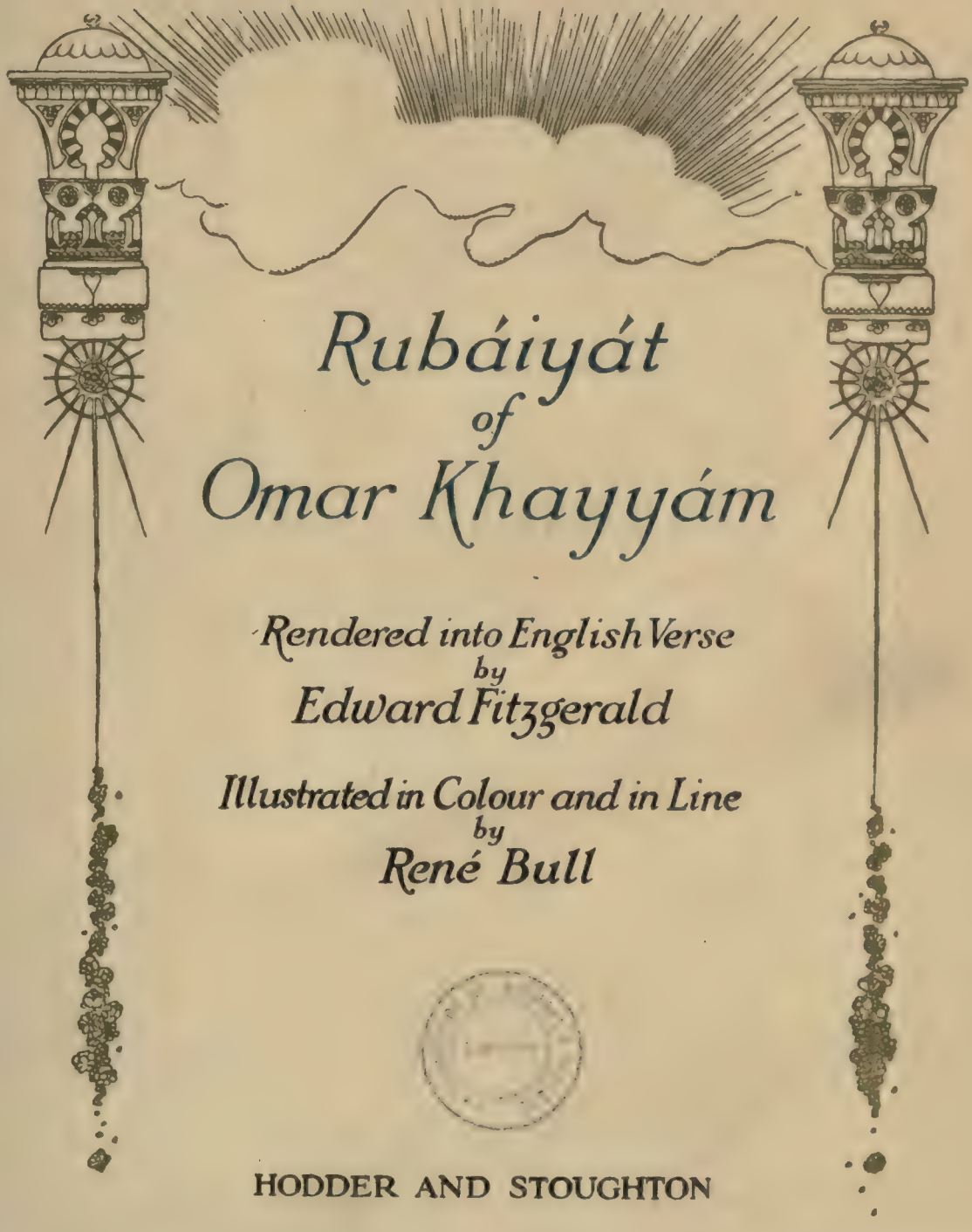

QUATRAIN
VII



Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

Rendered into English Verse
by
Edward Fitzgerald

Illustrated in Colour and in Line
by
René Bull

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

I

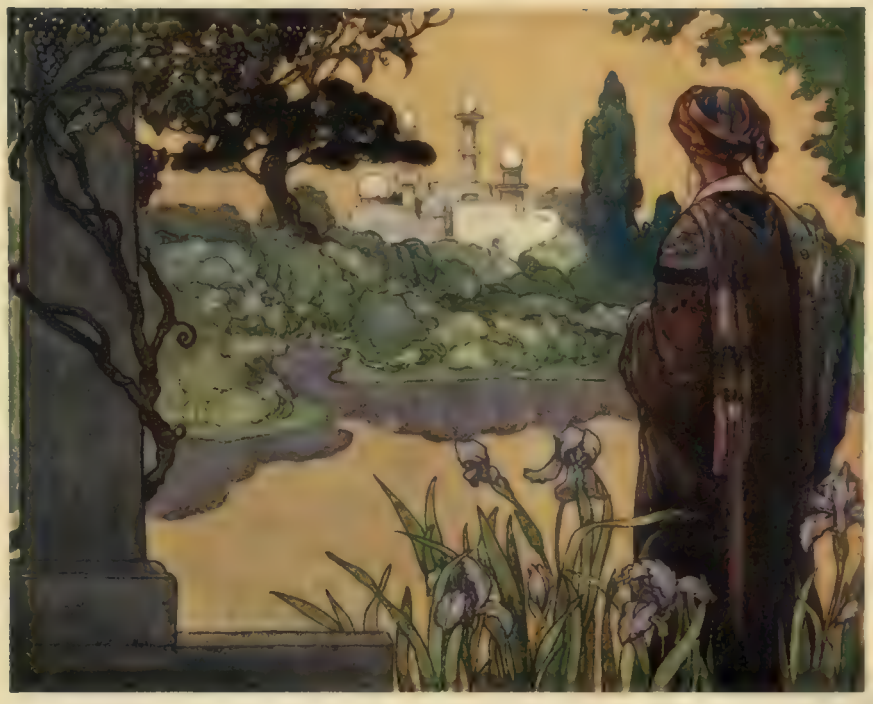
Awake! for Morning in the Bowl
of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars
to Flight:
And Lo! the Hunter of the East
has caught
The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.

II

Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand
was in the Sky
I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,
'Awake, my Little ones, and
fill the Cup
Before Life's Liquor in its Cup
be dry.'

IV

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the White Hand of Moses on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.



V

Irám indeed is gone with all its Rose,
And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup
where no one knows;
But still the Vine her ancient
Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water
blows.

VI

And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine
High-piping Pehlevi, with 'Wine! Wine!
Wine!
Red Wine!'—the Nightingale cries to
the Rose
That yellow Cheek of her's to incarnadine.

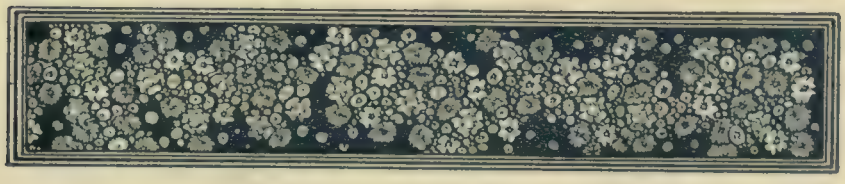
"And Wilderness is Paradise enow."

VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

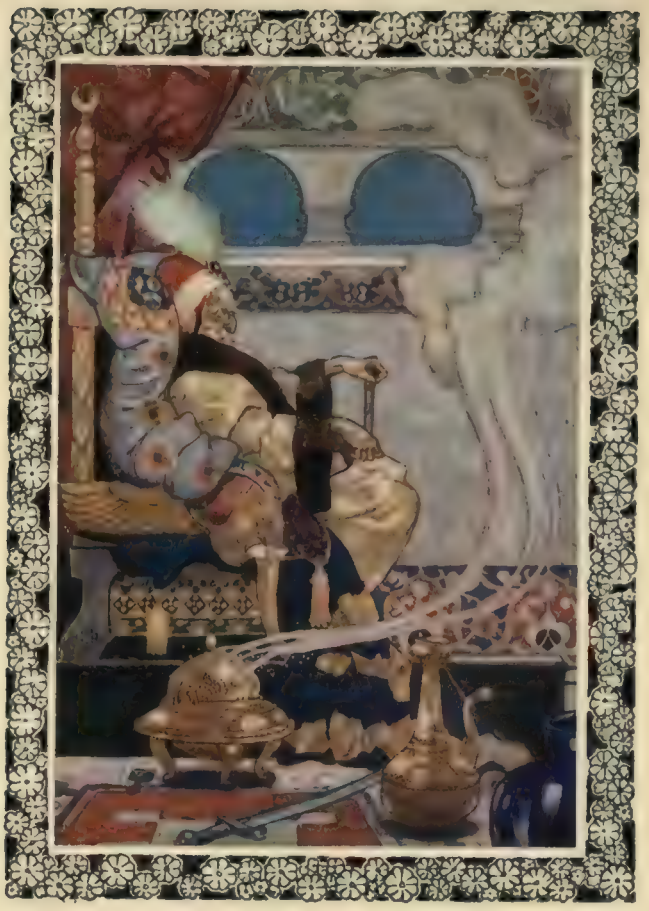
VIII

And look—a thousand Blossoms with the Day
Woke—and a thousand scatter'd into Clay:
And this first Summer Month that brings
the Rose
Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.



IX

But come with old Khayyám, and leave the Lot
Of Kaikobád and Kaikhosrú forgot:
Let Rustum lay about him as he will,
Or Hátim Tai cry Supper—heed them not.



X

With me along some Strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultan scarce is known,
And pity Sultán Máhmúd on his Throne.

"Abode his Hour or two, and went his way"

XI

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse
—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

XII

'How sweet is mortal Sovranty'—
think some:
Others—'How blest the Paradise
to come!'

Ah, take the Cash in hand and
waive the Rest;
Oh, the brave Music of a distant Drum!

XIII

Look to the Rose that blows about us—'Lo,
Laughing,' she says, 'into the World I blow:
At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.'

XIV

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

XV

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,
And those who flung it to the Winds
like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

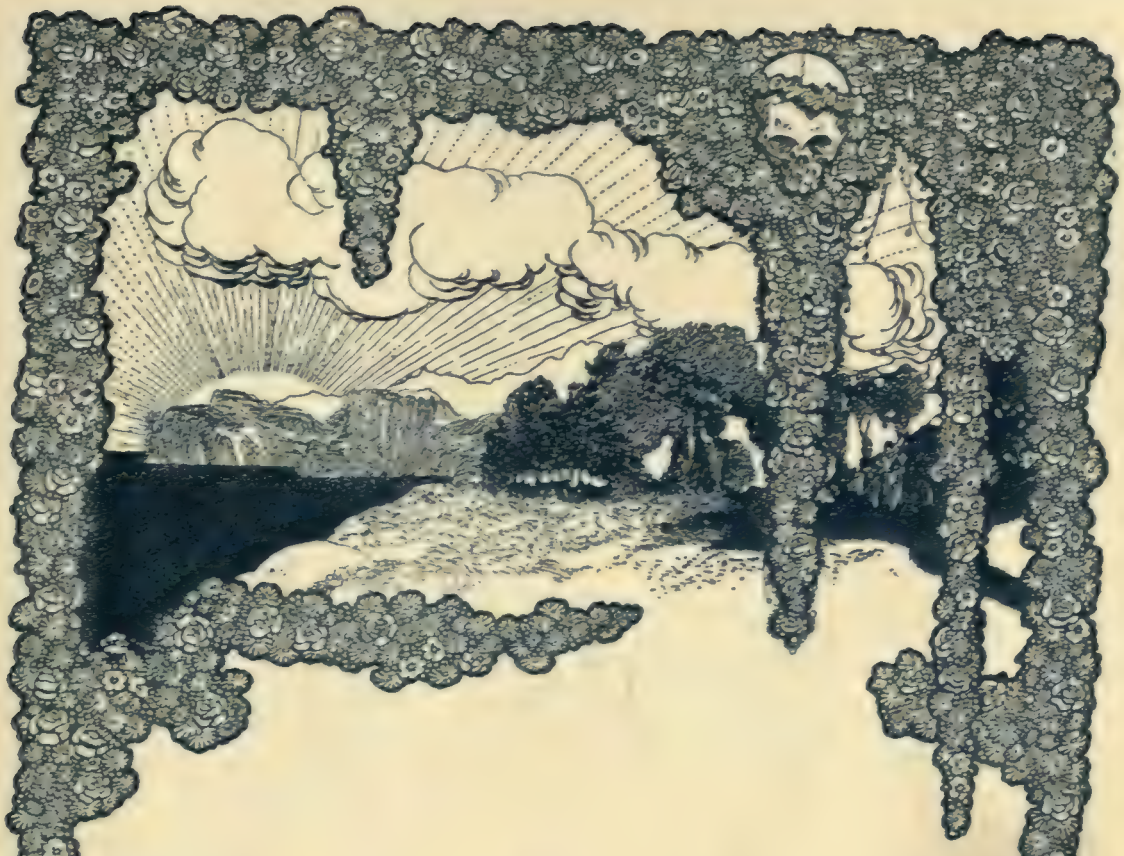
XVI

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.

XVII

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshÿd gloried
and drank deep;

And Bahrám, that great Hunter
—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies
fast asleep.



XVIII

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar
bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in its Lap from some once
lovely Head.

XIX

And this delightful Herb whose
tender Green
Fledges the River's Lip on which
we lean—
Ah! lean upon it lightly! for
who knows
From what once lovely Lip it
springs unseen!

XX

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears—
To-morrow?—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.

XXI

Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to Rest.

XXII

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the
Couch of Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch
—for whom ?

QUATRAIN XXIII

"Before we too into the Dust descend."

XXIII

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and
—sans End!

XXIV

Alike for those who for To-day prepare,
And those that after a To-morrow stare,
A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness
cries
'Fools! your Reward is neither
Here nor There!'

XXV

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

XXVI

Oh, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

"He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!"

XXVII

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.

XXVIII

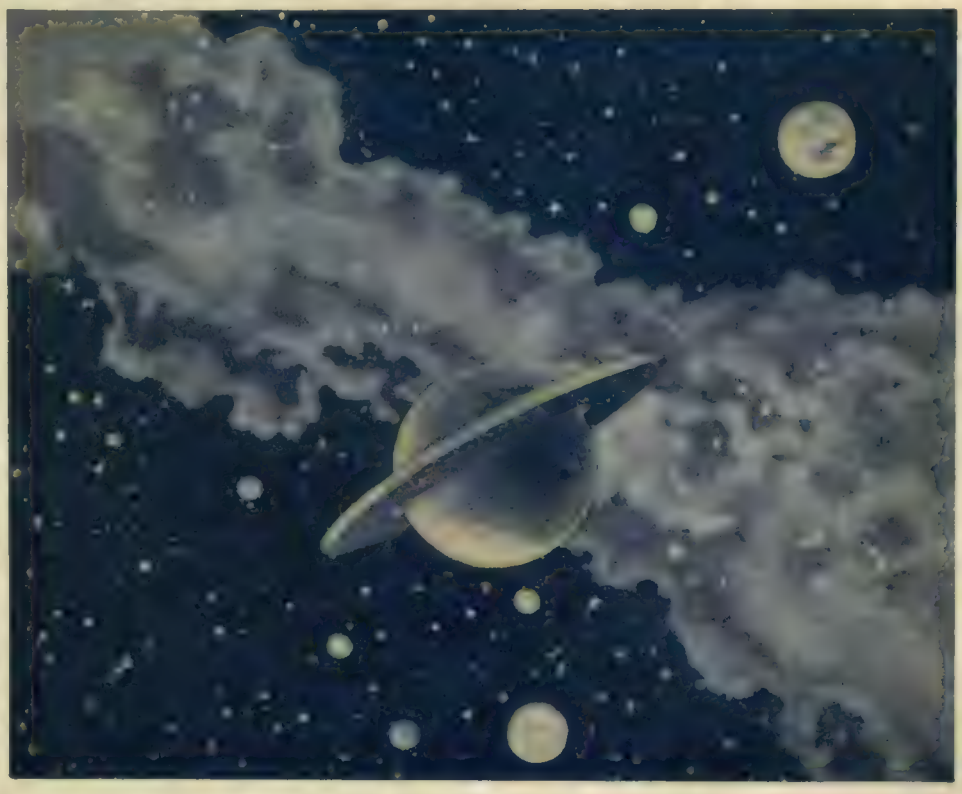
With them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand labour'd it to grow:
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
'I came like Water, and like Wind I go.'

XXIX

Into this Universe, and Why not knowing,
Nor Whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing:
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not Whither, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX

What, without asking, hither hurried Whence?
And, without asking, Whither hurried hence!
Another and another Cup to drown
The Memory of this Impertinence!

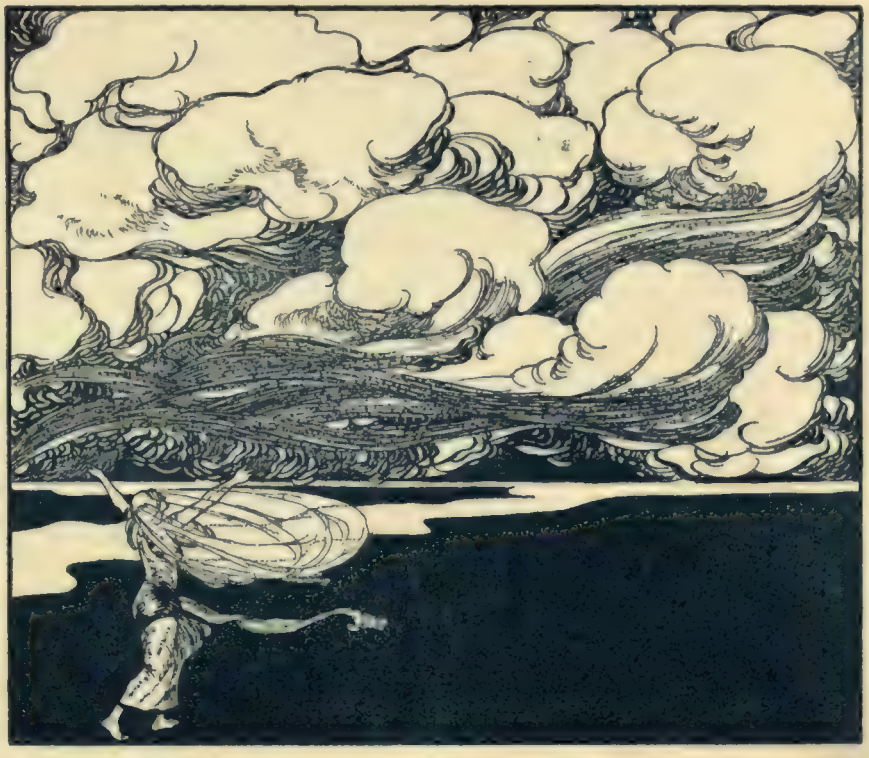


XXXI

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.

XXXII

There was a Door to which I found no Key:
There was a Veil past which I could not see:
Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seem'd—and then no more of
Thee and Me.



XXXIII

Then to the rolling Heav'n itself I cried,
Asking, 'What Lamp had Destiny
to guide
Her little Children stumbling in
the Dark?'
And—'A blind Understanding!'
Heav'n replied.

XXXIV

Then to this earthen Bowl did I
adjourn
My Lip the secret Well of Life
to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—
'While you live
Drink!—for once dead you never
shall return.'

XXXV

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer'd, once did live,
And merry-make; and the cold Lip I kiss'd
How many Kisses might it take—and give!

XXXVI

For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd—'Gently, Brother, gently, pray!'

XXXVII

Ah, fill the Cup:—what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday,
Why fret about them if To-day be sweet!

XXXVIII

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—
Oh, make haste!

XXXIX

How long, how long, in definite Pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

XL

You know, my Friends, how long since in
my House
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse:
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

XLI

For 'Is' and 'Is-not' though with
Rule and Line
And 'Up-and-down' without, I could define,
I yet in all I only cared to know,
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

XLII

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came stealing through the Dusk
an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas
—the Grape!

XLIII

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.

XLIV

The mighty Mahmúd, the victorious Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.

"But leave the Wise to wrangle"

XLV

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:
And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,
Make Game of that which makes as much
of Thee.

XLVI

For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,
Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.

QUATRAIN XLVII

"And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press"

XLVII

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in the Nothing all Things end in—Yes—
Then fancy while Thou art, Thou art
but what
Thou shalt be—Nothing—Thou shalt not
be less.

XLVIII

While the Rose blows along the River Brink,
With old Khayyám the Ruby Vintage drink:
And when the Angel with his darker Draught
Draws up to Thee—take that, and
do not shrink.

XLIX

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves, and mates,
and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

L

The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes;
And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field,
HE knows about it all—He knows—
HE knows!

"Take that, and do not shrink"

LI

The Moving Finger writes; and,
having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half
a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word
of it.

LII

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to It for help—for It
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

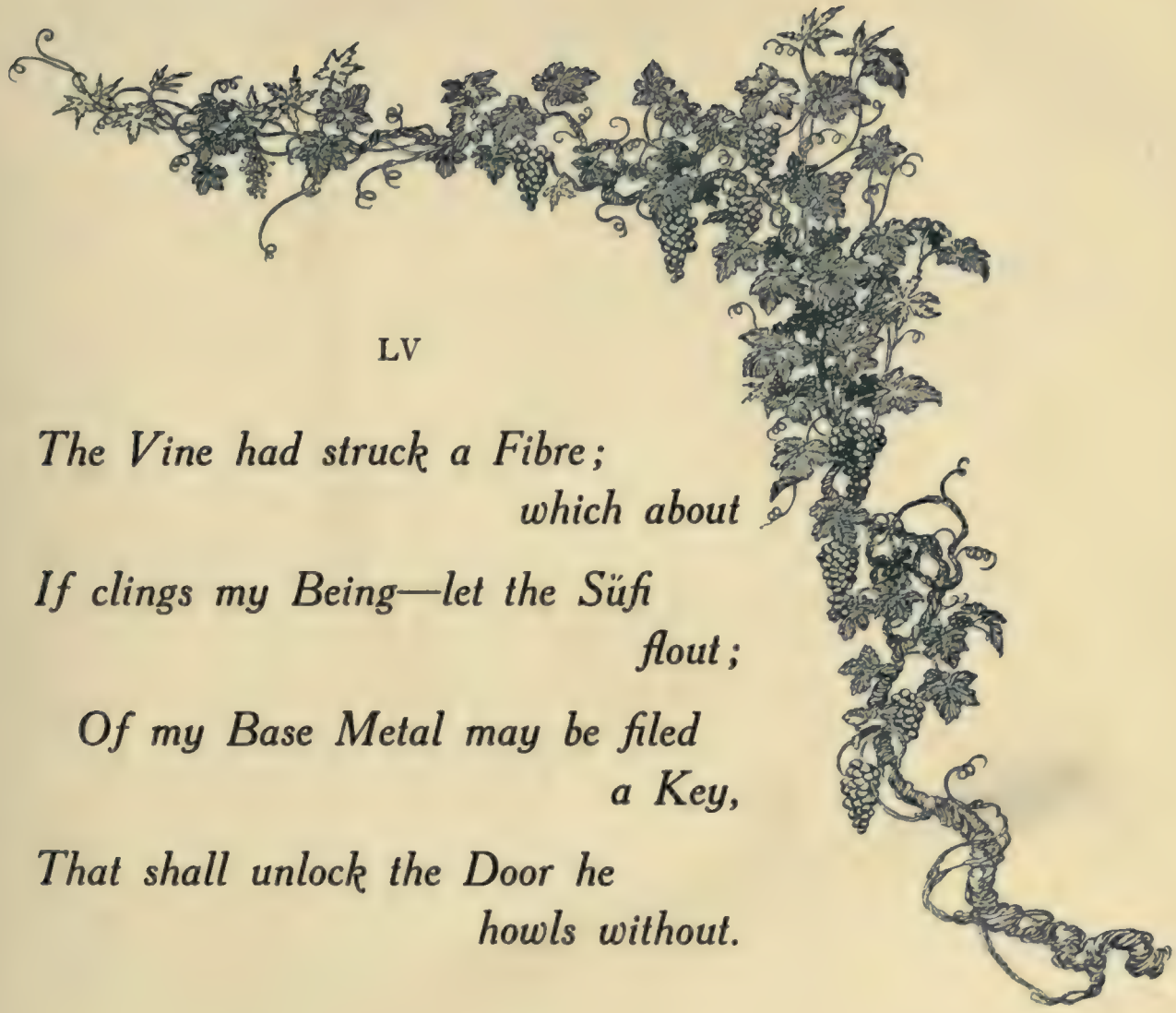
LIII

With Earth's first Clay They did the last
Man's knead,
And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LIV

I tell Thee this—When, starting from the Goal,
Over the shoulders of the flaming Foal
Of Heav'n Parwin and Mushtara they flung,
In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul.

"Lift not thy hands to It for help"



LV

The Vine had struck a Fibre;
which about
If clings my Being—let the Süfi
flout;
Of my Base Metal may be filed
a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he
howls without.

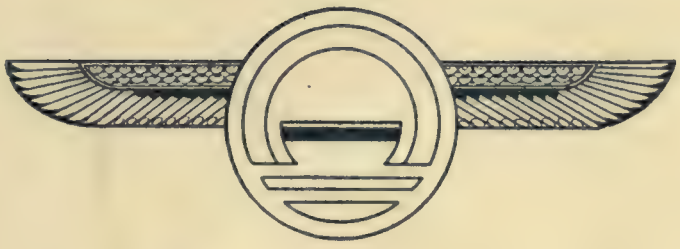
LVII

Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?

LVIII

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake;
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd, Man's Forgiveness give—
and take!

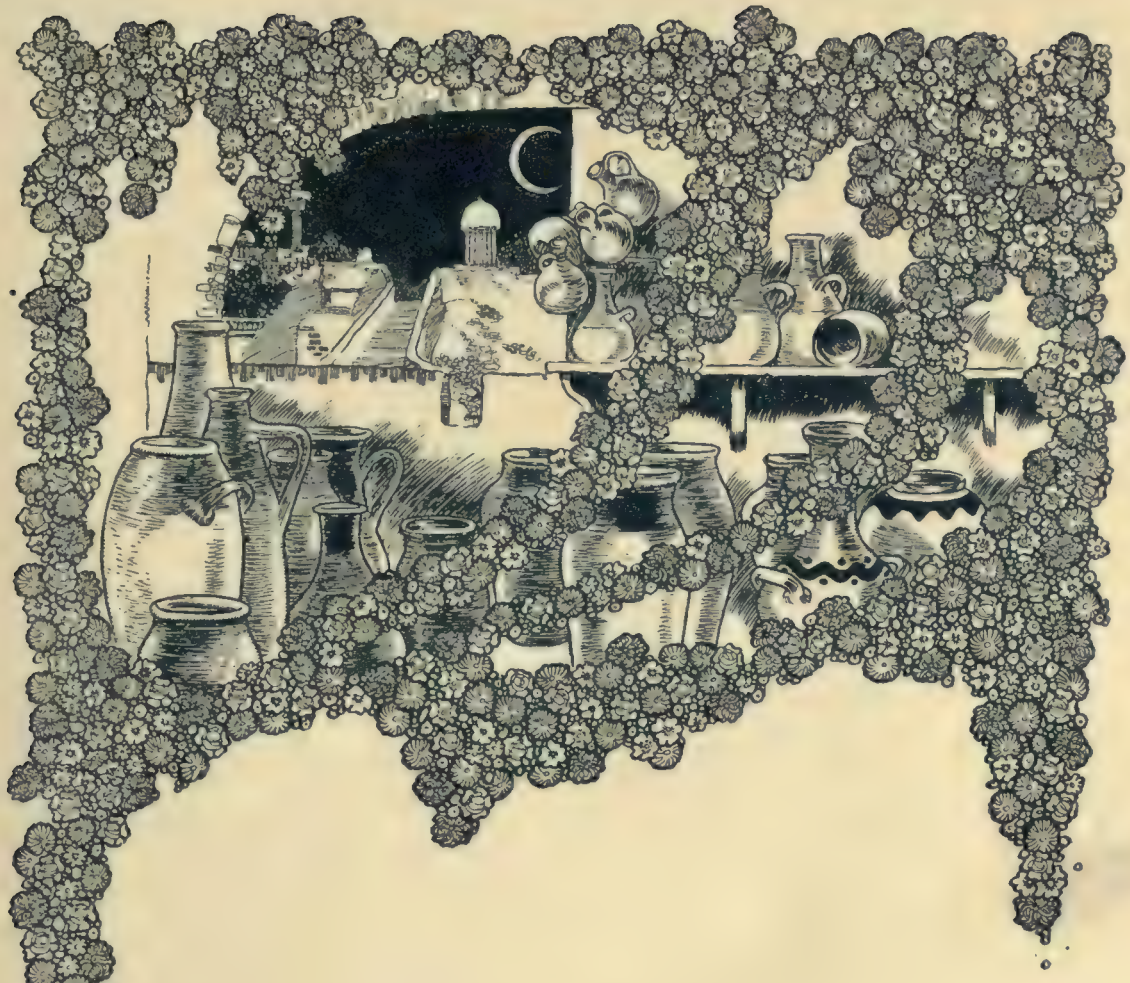
"Ah Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire"



KÚZA—NÁMA

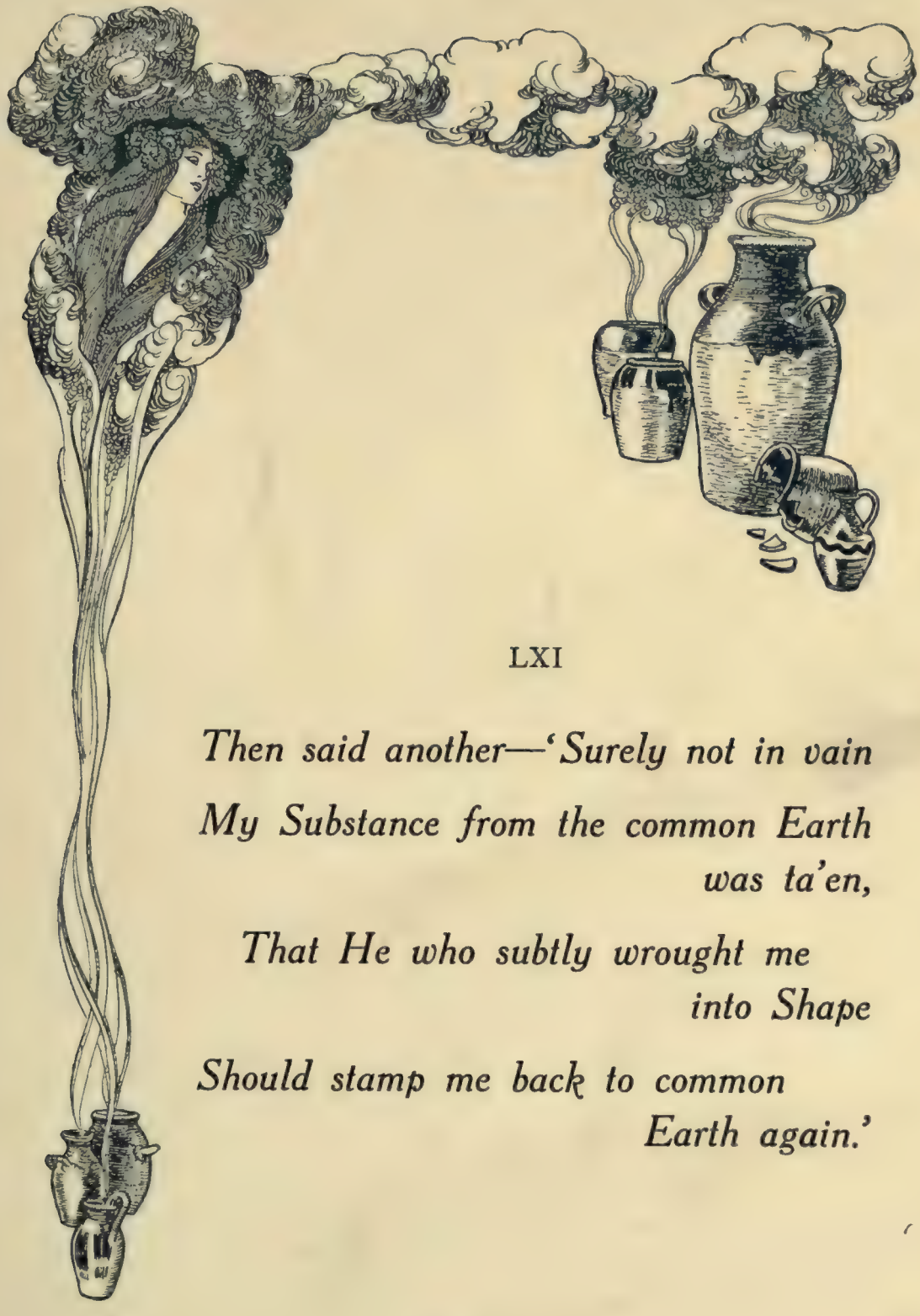
LIX

Listen again. One Evening at the Close
Of Ramazán, ere the better Moon arose,
In that old Potter's Shop I stood alone
With the clay Population round in Rows.



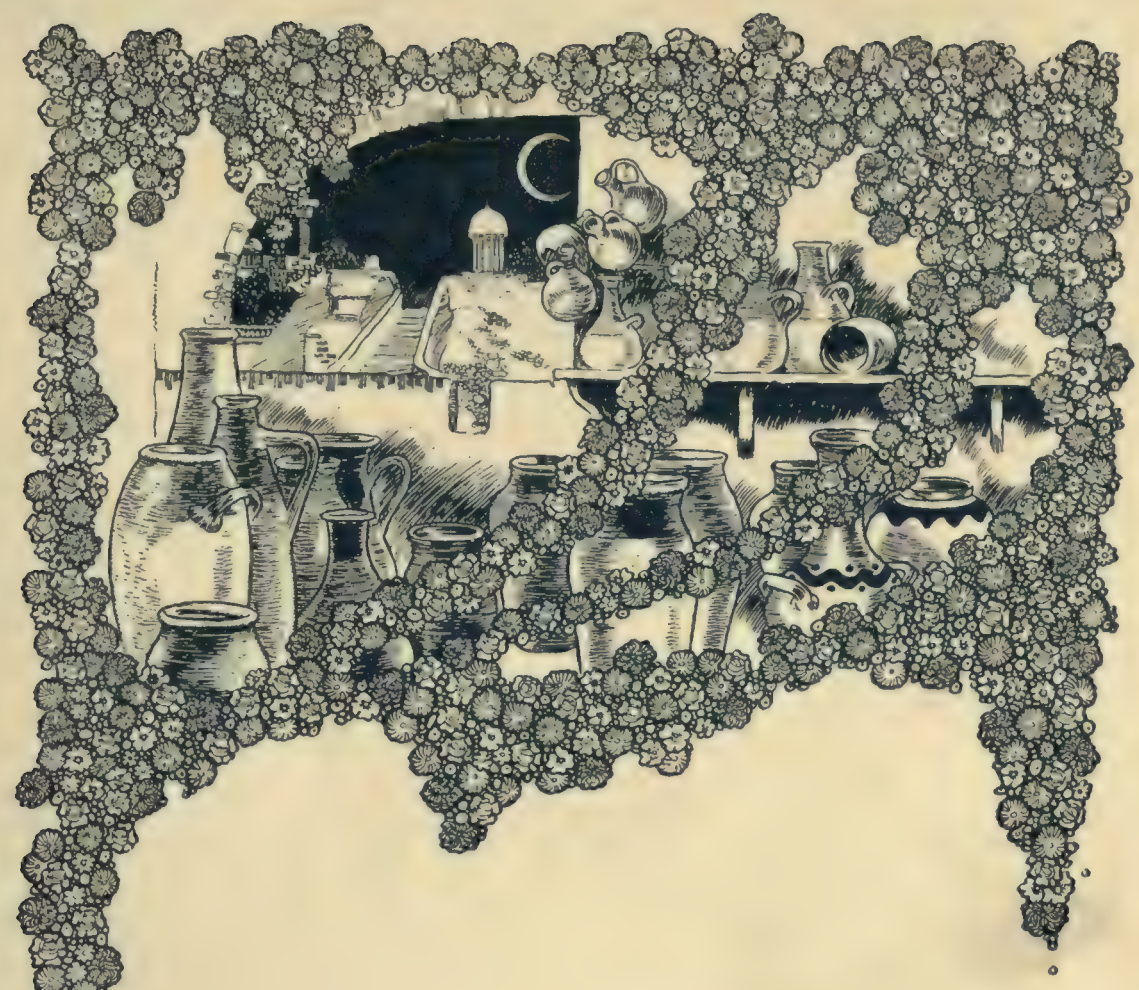
LX

And, strange to tell, among the Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others not:
And suddenly one more impatient cried—
'Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?'



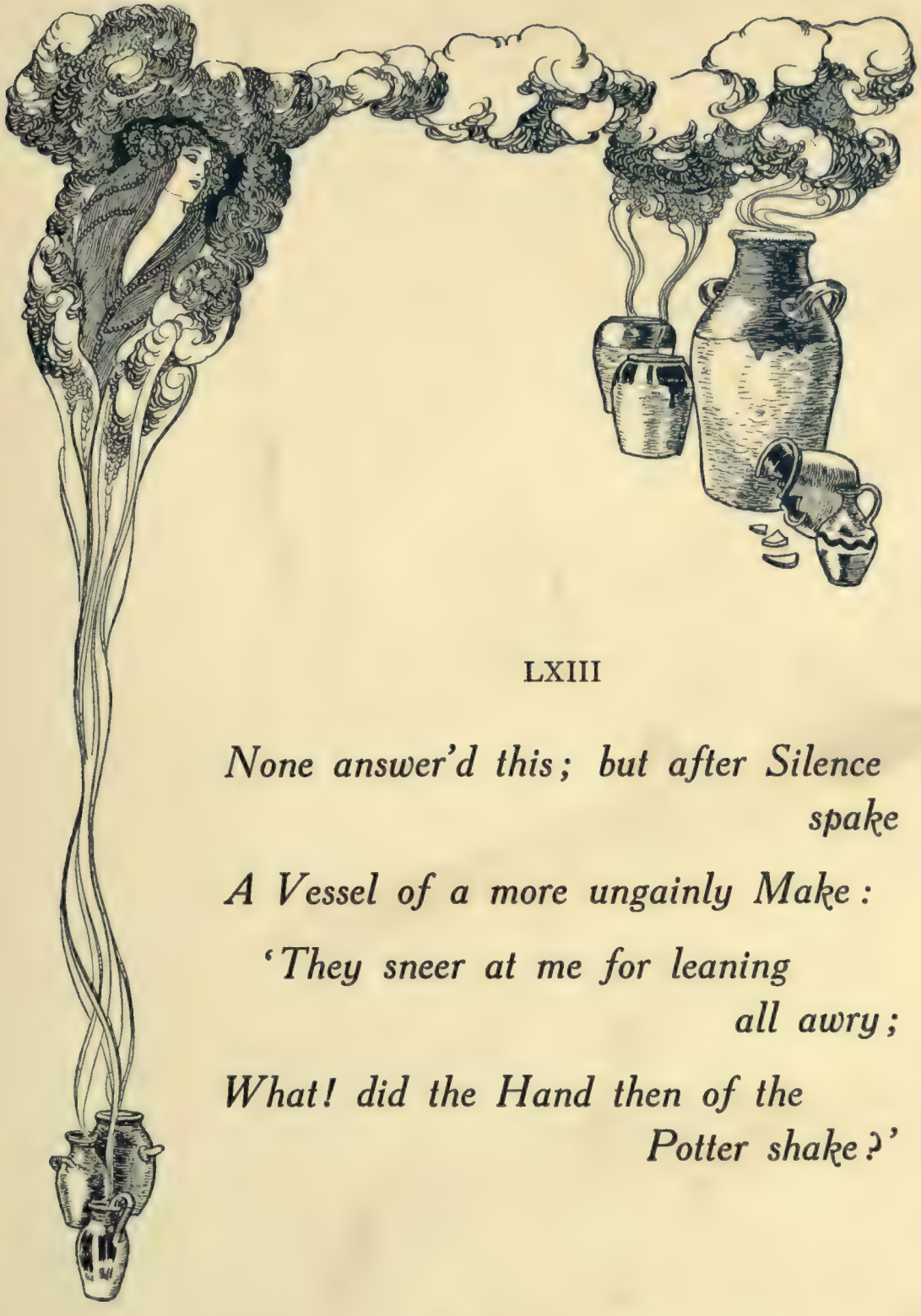
LXI

Then said another—'Surely not in vain
My Substance from the common Earth
was ta'en,
That He who subtly wrought me
into Shape
Should stamp me back to common
Earth again.'



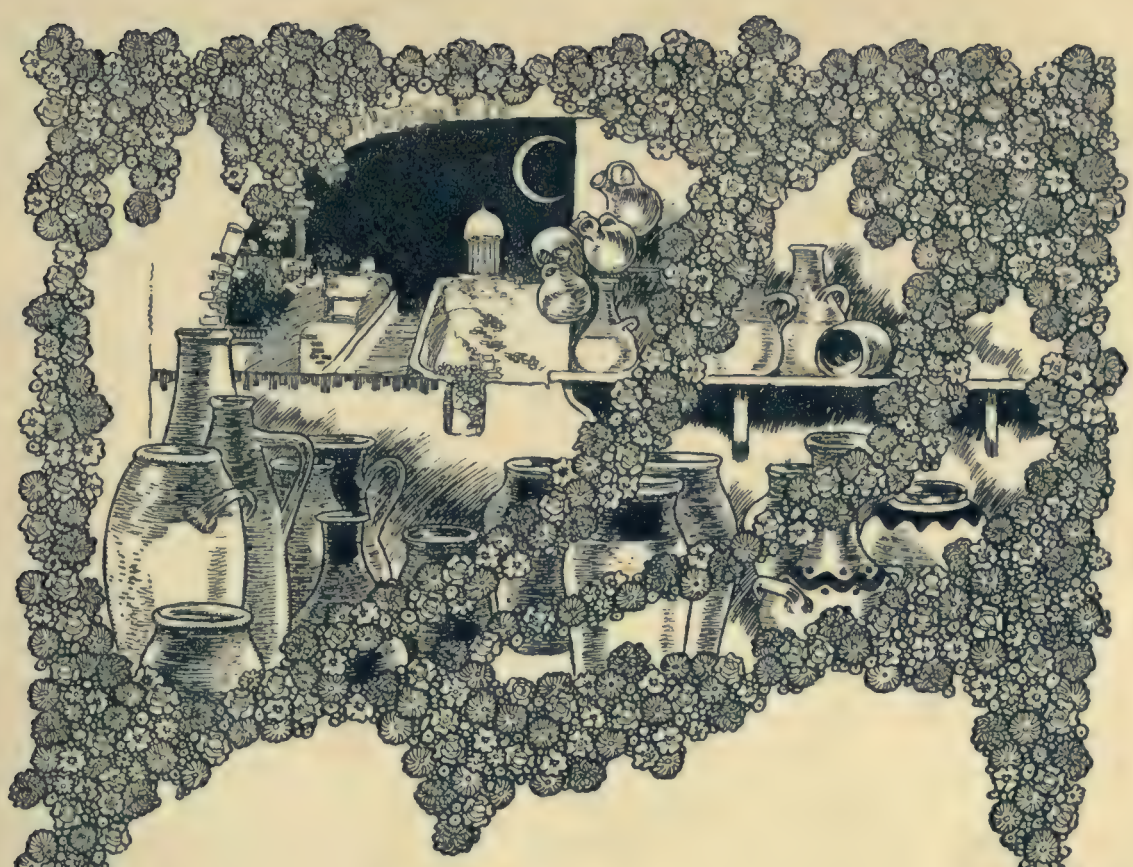
LXII

Another said—'Why, ne'er a peevish Boy,
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in Joy;
Shall He that made the Vessel in pure Love
And Fancy, in an after Rage destroy!'



LXIII

None answer'd this; but after Silence spake
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:
'They sneer at me for leaning all awry;
What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?'



LXIV

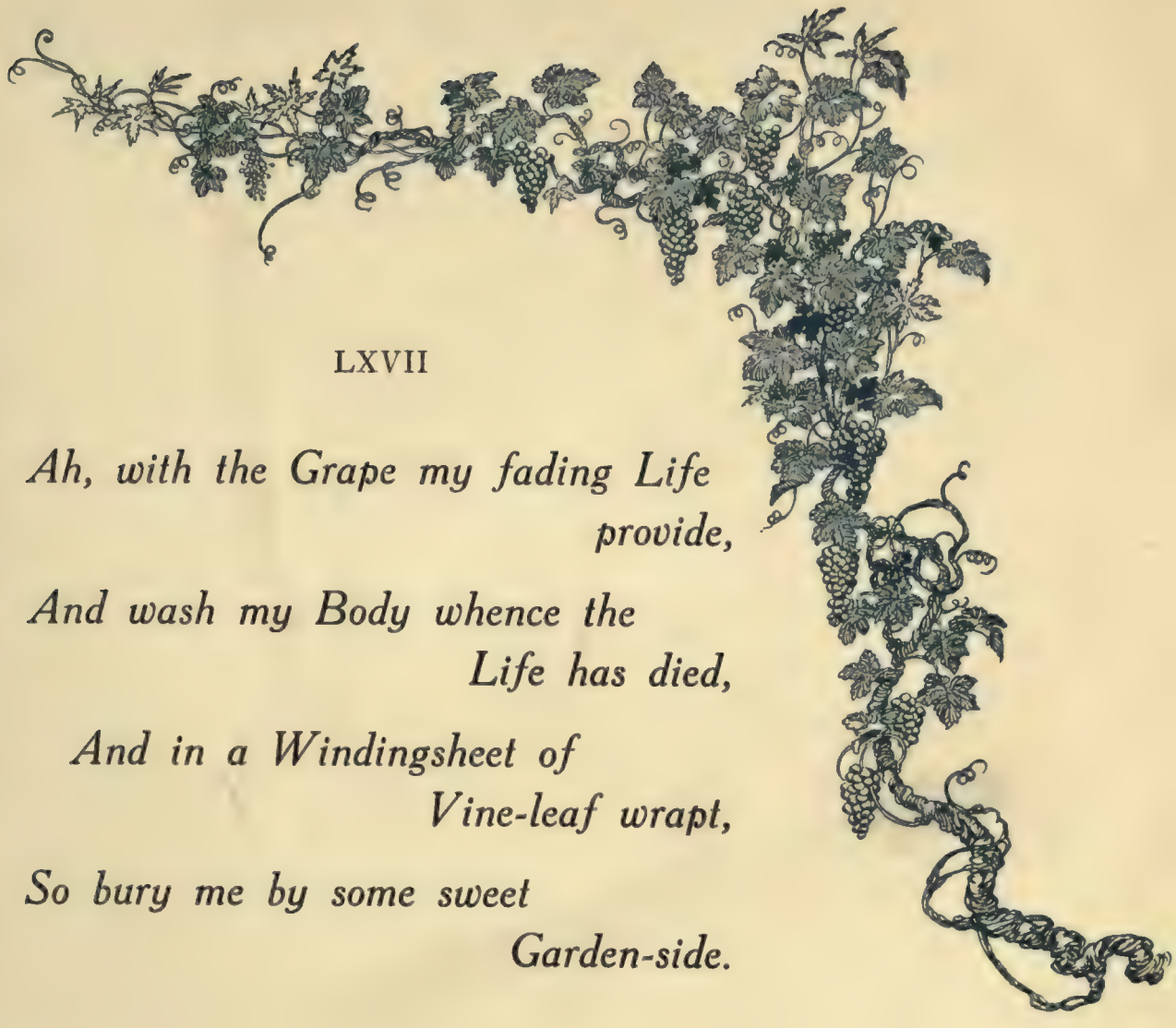
Said one—'Folks of a surly Tapster tell,
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;
They talk of some strict Testing of us—
Pish!
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well.'

LXV

Then said another with a long-drawn
Sigh,
'My Clay with long oblivion is
gone dry:
But, fill me with the old familiar
Juice,
Methinks I might recover by-and-bye!'

LXVI

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
One spied the little Crescent all were seeking:
And then they jogg'd each other,
'Brother, Brother!
Hark to the Porter's Shoulder-knot a creaking!'

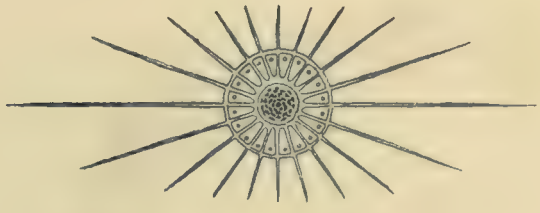


LXVII

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life
provide,
And wash my Body whence the
Life has died,
And in a Windingsheet of
Vine-leaf wrapt,
So bury me by some sweet
Garden-side.

LXVIII

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a Snare
Of Perfume shall fling up into the Air,
As not a True Believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

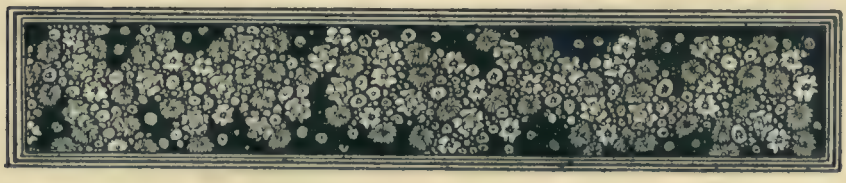


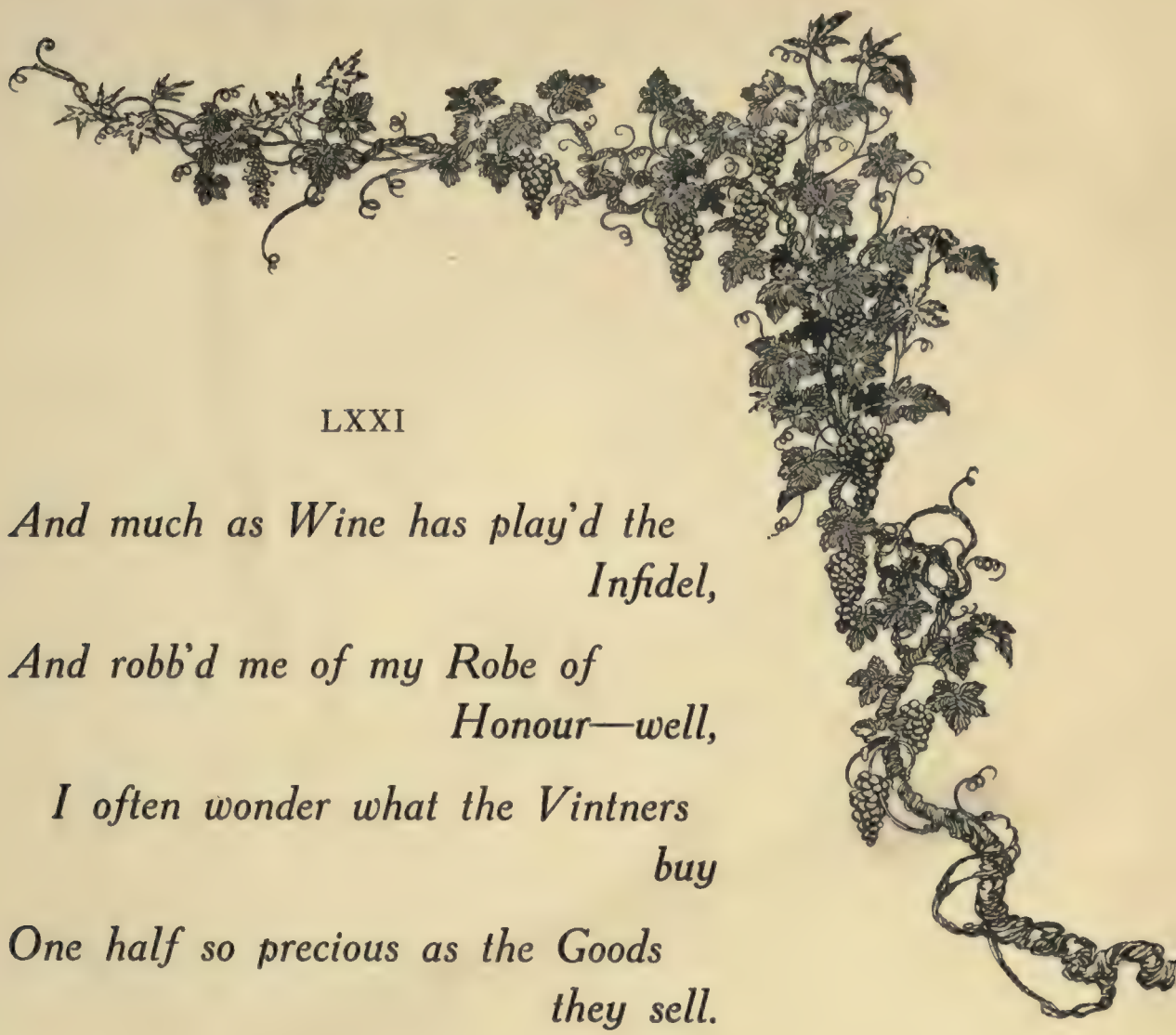
LXIX

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my Credit in Men's Eye much wrong:
Have drown'd my Honour in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

LXX

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?
And then and then came Spring, and
Rose-in-hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.





LXXI

And much as Wine has play'd the
Infidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of
Honour—well,
I often wonder what the Vintners
buy
One half so precious as the Goods
they sell.

LXXII

Alas, that Spring should vanish with
the Rose!

That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript
should close!

The Nightingale that in the Branches
sang,

Ah, whence, and whither flown again,
who knows!

LXXIII

Ah Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

LXXIV

Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me—in vain!

LXXV

And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot
Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass!

TAMÁM SHUD

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